

## CHILDCARE

Ideas. Action. Purpose.

# Child Care That Works for Alberta Families

There are many great opportunities for Alberta workers in this economy — but it's not that easy to find affordable, quality child care. That means parents who want to work may not have that option, or may have to settle for less than ideal care. Choosing between employment and adequate child care is not something Alberta parents should have to do.

There are currently spaces for only 10 per cent of Alberta's young children in regulated child care settings. Parents in rural and remote areas are especially under-served. Despite our rapidly growing economy, Alberta is the only province where the number of day care spaces actually *dropped* between 1992 and 2004. That makes it tough for parents, and for employers struggling to find and keep employees. We need to do more, and we *can* do more.

The Alberta Liberals have three priorities for child care:

- **Increase the number of high quality child care spaces.** First, we would increase funding to child care providers to assist with both start-up and operational costs. High quality child care is not just care but also assists children's development, educationally and socially. As of 2004, Alberta spent the lowest amount per child care space of any province in Canada. We see child care funding not as an expense, but as an *investment*, and one that will pay long-term dividends.

We would also catch up to other provinces in providing child care allowances for children aged 6 to 12 years, to help more families afford out-of-school care and respite care for their school-age children. Improving grants to municipalities to encourage their involvement in child care and working with industry to improve conditions for employees with children are also part of our plan.

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- **Improve the stability and quality of the child care work force.** Excellent child care workers are hard to find and to keep. To help accredited child care centres attract and retain staff, the Alberta Liberals would increase government wage enhancements so they can pay qualified workers a competitive and reasonable wage.

We would also attract more people to the child care field by offering educational bursaries — bursaries they would not have to pay back if they are still working in child care in Alberta after three years.

- **Give parents and caregivers more child care options.** We know that parents in Alberta want options when it comes to child care. As well as introducing subsidies for children aged 6 to 12, we would offer incentives to child care centres to provide infant and toddler care because we know there are higher costs associated with caring for very young children.

The Alberta Liberals believe the parents of young children deserve our support as hardworking and productive members of the workforce. Our childcare investments are designed to benefit not only young Alberta families, but to have a positive and lasting impact on the social and economic well-being of our province.

Want to know more? Visit [www.albertaliberal.com](http://www.albertaliberal.com) or call us at 1-800-661-9201.

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